



Statement of the Connecticut Medical Cannabis Council
General Law Committee
Medical Marijuana and Adult-Use Cannabis bills
February 23, 2023

Representative D'Agostino, Senator Maroney, Representative Rutigliano, Senator Cicarella and members of the committee:

The Connecticut Medical Cannabis Council is comprised of the four producers of Medical Marijuana and Adult-Use Cannabis products that are sold in dispensaries and retail stores throughout the state. Our members include Advanced Grow Labs (West Haven), CT Pharma (Rocky Hill), Curaleaf (Simsbury) and Theraplant (Watertown). Collectively, we employ hundreds of Connecticut residents and pay millions of dollars annually to local, state and federal governments in taxes. We have compensation packages for full-time employees that are industry competitive with excellent health care and other benefits.

Routinely, at national cannabis conferences and events, we can tell you that Connecticut's Medical Marijuana Program is considered to be one of the best in the nation. A primary reason for this is the market is highly regulated, with all product being laboratory tested and labeled in a way that patients know precisely what they are getting to address their medical issues.

We want to thank you, the members of this committee, for taking strong action last year in lifting the various fees that were being assessed on patients and caregivers. This has played a large role in preserving the patient count, now about 49,000 in the program. Had you not done this, the entire program could have faced collapse. One exciting aspect of the program is research that is being done of the ability of cannabis to mitigate patients' pain. We can discuss this in more detail if you would like.

Meanwhile, our four members have all converted to provide products for the Adult-Use Cannabis program. We believe the start-up experienced very few problems, and this is a credit to everyone involved with the program. We would like to acknowledge the consistent commitment of the Department of Consumer Protection, through Commissioner Seagull and her outstanding staff, to provide us with the guidance we have needed to meet program specifications and requirements. We are heavily-regulated by the state, and believe this process has worked well to instill a sense of confidence in the integrity of this new program.

Our four members collectively produce many different products that we deliver on-time to retail stores. All are laboratory-tested and quality controlled. We place a high priority in meeting the product needs of consumers, something that requires extensive planning since it takes months to grow and process the plants. We respond quickly when we have an indication that a shortage of one or more products might be occurring.

Turning to the six bills that are on your agenda today, we will be providing additional comments to you in writing on several of them. However, we do want to note that in regard to House Bill 6700, to automatically add hemp licensees as cultivators or micro-cultivators to the Adult-Use Program, we feel this legislation is premature. You specifically passed legislation in last year's session that called for the creation of a 10-member working group to review this very issue. Yet, the working group has never met, and has not issued the required final report. That process needs to occur before hemp is allowed to cut to the front of the line. A number of companies have been patiently waiting for the same license. We suggest that you let the Adult-Use program roll-out in 2023 before any new or significant expansions to the cultivation component are made.

Thank you for considering the views of the Connecticut Medical Cannabis Council.